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TO THE
PEOPLE OF SOUTHAMPTON.

LETTER I.

Botley, 23d March, 1816.

MY WORTHY NEIGHBOURS, I seize the present occasion to address myself to you on the subject of your *political degradation*. You now *feel* the insults of ROSE and his minions; you now smart under the insolent publications, in which 485 of you, who signed a Petition against the Property Tax (and who consisted of gentlemen and tradesmen) have been called *Paupers* and *Chimney Sweepers*, with the exception of about 20 or 30. This insult *stings* you; and, to be frank with you, I am glad it does. When some accident has, to all appearance, deprived a beloved son of life, with what joy does the parent perceive him *move*, upon being cut or pinched; with what joy does he behold the symptoms of returning sensibility, though produced by the infliction of a wound! With somewhat similar feelings do I now behold the indignant state of mind prevalent at Southampton, on account of the gross insult now inflicted on you. It is a symptom of returning public spirit; and, if it lead to a new line of conduct on your part; if it produce in you a resolution to assert your rights; if it cure you of your slavish submission to the will of a sinecure placeman, and to the delusions of faction, (the last being full as bad as the first,) this insult, stinging as it is, will prove to have been the greatest benefit that you ever received.

That the Mayor of Southampton should have refused to call a Meeting on a requisition signed by 16 persons, all gentlemen of fortune, or most respectable tradesmen; that an impudent slave (in the *Courier*) should have spoken most contemptuously of these signatures, and have dared to justify the conduct of the Mayor; that the vile trick of stealing away your Petition from the Inn where it lay for signatures should have been practised; that the Mayor should a second time have refused to call a Meeting, though, when you

met of your own right, the space of seven hours produced and sent forward another petition signed by 483 names. That all this should have happened in so opulent a town as Southampton, and inhabited by a people as remarkable for their good manners, good morals, and general respectability as the town and its environs are for their salubrity and beauty, must be very galling to you; but, I should be guilty of a base abandonment of my duty, if I did not say, in this public manner, that you *deserve* all this, and a great deal more, at the hands of those from whom you have received it.

You have not the same excuse as almost the whole of the rest of the kingdom. You have the power of choosing your Members of Parliament. I am aware of the trick of *out-lying* voters; I am aware that you have not that *perfect* freedom in this respect which *Westminster* has. But, still, if the great body of the town were animated with a soul worthy of freemen, neither ROSE nor ROSE'S SON would ever have been a Member for Southampton.

You now feel the galling load of taxes press upon you. You now see, that many amongst you, though persons of the greatest industry and probity, are sinking from a state of competence into beggary: you now see fathers, lately surrounded with happy families, half mad at the contemplation of the degradation and misery to which those families are now inevitably doomed; you are now mourning over that "*national ruin*," which is no longer a rhetorical figure, but a literal and naked *reality*. But, who has more largely contributed towards this lamentable state of things than yourselves?

This is the season for speaking plainly to you; for making you see that what you now suffer is the natural result of the measures which you have so long supported; for placing before you, in their true light, the men whom you have chosen to represent you; and for pointing out what ought to be your conduct in future. And, this I will attempt to do fully in my next Number. In the mean while I remain your friend,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
PEOPLE OF THE U. S. OF AMERICA.

LETTER V.

“Old England! And those who don't like it, d—n them, let them leave it.”—The real sources of the strength and wealth of England.—The Marriage and Marriage Settlement of the Princess of Wales.

Botley, March 23d, 1816.

For several years it had been the fashion, amongst the “loyal” in this country, to bid those who found fault with the measures of Pitt and Dundas, and who did not like the idea of living in the continual liability to be sent to jail, without any charge of crime, and without any Habeas Corpus Act whereby to obtain a hearing; it had, for years, been the fashion, amongst the loyal, to bid such “malecontents” to “leave the country, if they did not like it.” But, in 1809, when many persons expressed their discontent at the things proved to have been done by the Duke of York, Mrs. Clarke, Castlereagh, Perceval, Sandon, O'Meara, Redding, and others. Fuller, a Member of Parliament, exclaimed, in the House of Commons, in answer to some one who had been complaining of these things—*“Old England! And those who don't like it, d—n them, let them leave it!”*

This was a very modest sort of doctrine; such as the Lauds, and Jeffries, and Scroggses, would, of course, have held in their day. The Act of Habeas Corpus we boast of as *the only security for personal liberty*. Yet, was this act suspended for seven years at one time, though there was neither invasion nor rebellion. For seven years Pitt and his associates imprisoned, during their pleasure, whomsoever they pleased, and for as long a time as they pleased, without ever bringing the imprisoned persons to trial. Those who did not like this; who liked as little the new laws about *the press* and about *treason*; and who thought it rather hard for a man to be liable to be hanged, have his bowels ripped up, and his body chopped into four quarters, for sending a bushel of potatoes to France.

Those who did not relish these things were told “d—n them,” that they might *leave the country*. Those who did not approve of the law, which made it *treason* to send a bushel of corn to France; those who did not approve of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; those who did not approve of Mrs. Clarke's selling Commissions in the army; those who did not approve of the letting, or selling, of seats in Parliament; those who did not approve of the innumerable and monstrous robberies committed by the placemen, pensioners, and contractors, and of the atrocious cruelties inflicted on every man who dared to speak, or publish, truth; those who did not approve of all these things, and of that bloody and expensive war, which was waged for the purpose of preventing liberty from being established in France: every man who did not approve of these things, was insolently told *to leave the country*, while, however, laws were kept in force *to prevent people from leaving it!* Those who could not be happy under these oppressions and insults; those who were discontented with these things, were always told, by the “loyal,” that they might leave Old England, if they did not like it. In vain did we (for I soon became one of the malecontents) observe, that we had no dislike to *Old England*; that, on the contrary, we liked it exceedingly; that it was the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, the deeds discovered relative to Pitt and Melville, the Bills of indemnity to Pitt, the deeds mentioned in Mr. Maddocks's motion, the deeds and proceedings in the case of the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke, the language of Perceval and Canning, the new laws about the press and about treason; in vain did we observe, that it was these things, together with the enormous taxes laid upon us, that we did not like, and that, as we humbly conceived, these things were not “*Old England*,” which we loved very sincerely, and which we were ready to defend (if she should be placed in danger) to the utmost of our power. We said, that we had never before heard that Foreign Troops, stationed in the heart of the country, and Foreign Officers commanding whole districts of it, were “*Old England*,” and, that, until now, we had never heard it disputed, that Englishmen might dislike such troops and offi-

cers without exposing themselves to the charge of disliking "*Old England*." In vain did we urge this distinction. No: Pitt, and Dundas, and Paul Benfield, and the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the Duke of York, and Perceval, and Mrs. Clarke, and O'Meara, and Canning, and Croker, and Sandon, and Redding, and Castlereagh, and the Hanoverian Officers and Troops, and the Income Tax, and the Licences for the Press; these, our opponents insisted, were *Old England*; and, if we did not like it, we might leave it.

To have been obliged to endure this insolent language for so many years gives us a claim now to exercise a little retaliation. When we hear those, who formerly bade us leave the country, crying out against the Income Tax, we now bid *them* leave "*Old England*," if they do not like it. Some of them seem to be endeavouring to profit from the hint; for a Member stated a few nights ago, in the House of Commons, that a very *worthy* man lately applied to him to get the government to send him and his family to *Botany Bay*! This must amuse NAPOLEON, if he should happen to hear of it. Nine tenths, nay, ninety-nine hundredths, of those who now so bitterly complain of the taxes, the tithes, the poor rates, and the standing army, have a thousand times bid the Jacobins leave the country, if they did not like it. We now return the advice, with this addition, that, if they cannot leave "*Old England*," they have our free and hearty consent to hang or drown themselves in it. We do now, as we always did, like *Old England* better than any other country in the world. We never intended, or wished, to leave it. We answer, as Major Cartwright did, when some one advised him to go to America, during the first American war: "No: though I disapprove of what is doing on board the *Old Ship*, I'll never quit her, while there is any hope of her being saved; and, even if that hope vanishes, I'll stay and sink with her." I do not say, that any man is *bound* to do this; but, I do say, that, while there is a *chance* of seeing the country what it ought to be; while any man, embarked in the public cause, can, without a manifestly *useless* sacrifice of his life or property, continue the struggle, it is baseness in him to avoid by flight his share of the calamities of his country.

It is now that men are *tried* to the bottom. Who are they, who are now seeking cheap living on the Continent? who are they, who are now leaving the burdens of the war to be sustained by others? Not those who were opposed to the war. Who are they who are now giving up the country in despair? Not those who have, for so many years, been calumniated as the friends of France. It is now become visible, that those who were most opposed to the measures of the government; those who condemned the numerous acts hostile to freedom; who censured the unwarrantable pretensions set up by the government against foreign nations: it is now become visible, that these persons are the least reluctant to bear their share of the sufferings which the war has entailed upon the country. And, the reason is this: that they foresaw these sufferings, and were prepared to meet them. Such persons know how to estimate justly the character and qualities of their country. Such persons, while they despise the exaggerations and the empty boastings, and abhor the atrocious hypocrisy, by which the foolish have been gulled by the wicked, can discover in the bravery, the zeal, the perseverance, the hardihood, the incessant labour, the unparalleled mutual confidence, of Englishmen, and in their kindness and generosity, (where prejudice is dumb,) quite enough to make them love their country. If such persons have not seen with deep regret the discomfiture of the late project against the American States, accompanied as it was with disgrace, which, in itself, was most painful to contemplate, it was because they were convinced, that the success of that project would, in the end, have proved the everlasting grave of the liberties of England; and because, the humiliation, though great in itself, was much diminished by the reflection, that those who inflicted it were the sons of Englishmen. The battles, fought in Europe, have, in proportion to the numbers engaged, been mere child's play, compared to those fought in America. It was *there*, and *there only*, that we met with our match; and, when it is considered *who* it was with whom we fought, the only really humiliating reflection is, that the enemy should so far have exceeded us in *generosity*.

The late long, expensive, devastating

plundering, and bloody wars, marked as they were in their progress, and have been in their result, by so many and such great evils to the world, and to England in particular, have left behind them no evil equal to that of the change in our national character. As towards foreign nations we were always proud, insolent, and grasping for dominion and power. But, of late, we have discovered *other passions and dispositions*, which I will not describe, and which certainly did not formerly belong to us. To take from us our laborious and persevering habits in all the departments of life, our confidence between man and man, our strong and even violent parental and filial affections, is, perhaps, impossible. That love of country, which consists in a contempt, or hatred, of all other countries, still continues in full force; but, that attachment to *liberty*, which was amongst the best of our characteristics, has been greatly enfeebled, and chiefly by the means of the most active and corrupt press that ever disgraced a nation; which press has, for 25 years, been constantly employed in the cause of despotism; which has, at last, made us look with satisfaction at what is going on in France and Spain; and which is now tolerated, while it justifies the re-establishment of the Inquisition and the massacre of Protestants. A passion for what is called *national glory* has usurped the place of our love of *civil and political liberty*. We seem conscious of our loss of the latter, and appear to try to make the world forget it by the noise we are making about the former. The *distress* which has, at last, been brought upon us by our pursuit of this phantom, may, perhaps, awaken us to a sense of our folly and injustice; and, if it should, it will prove to be the greatest of blessings.

What I, a hundred times, foretold has come to pass. The war being at an end, the fears of the timid being dissipated, the passions of the brave being allayed, the prejudices of all affording no longer such an immense scope for the deceivers of the press, the nicknames of politics being banished from the language, we begin to have a disposition to estimate one another according to our real worth, and, above all, our minds, which must always be at work with energy upon something or another, begin to be turned to our own

national affairs, and with this singular advantage over former times, that *political parties* have, during the time of turmoil, been so completely exposed and discredited, as never to be able again to deceive the people, and to draw off their attention from those objects that are of real importance to them. Amongst many heavy losses we have, at any rate, this clear gain; that there is not now to be found any of that doltishness, which formerly divided every town and every company into *Whigs* and *Tories*. There was a time when no inconsiderable part of the people wore the *Windsor Uniform*, as a mark of attachment to *PITT*, or, *Blue and Buff*, as a mark of attachment to *Fox*. I will engage that there is not, even amongst the lowest of the people, a single man now to be found in England, who would not laugh to scorn any attempt to make him believe, that one of the *parties* is better than the other. *LORD GREY*, I have heard, attributed this destruction of the credit of *party* to me. I thank his Lordship for the honour he did me, but it was not my due. The country owes this inestimable benefit to *SIR FRANCIS BURDETT* more than to any other man living; but, indeed, it was the disclosures, made from 1805 to 1809, inclusive, that procured us this great and permanent good. The people have *learnt* a great deal. They now understand much more than they ever before understood about the nature and operations of the government; about the way in which taxes are expended, and about the manner in which they themselves are affected by them. Mere *sounds*, mere signals of party, have lost their power. The Bible Societies, though very numerous and active, are wholly insufficient to check the spirit of political inquiry and investigation. The distresses now prevailing, the discussions as to the causes of these distresses, the pressing nature of them, the great and immediate interest which they excite in all classes, must add to the stock of national information.

It is much to be desired, not only for our own sake, but that of the *whole world*, that we should be actuated by just sentiments; for, strange as it appears at first sight, the peace, happiness, and freedom of mankind is, in a great degree, in our hands. The narrow limits of the country, its comparatively barren soil, its un-

favourable climate, and its scanty population, make it appear presumptuous to hold it up in this important point of view. But, when we come to look more closely into the matter, we shall not find the notion so very wild. An Englishman, while he eats and drinks no more than another man, labours three times as many hours in the course of a year as any other man. His life is three common lives. People of other countries have some *leisure hours*. An Englishman has none. He always walks or rides as fast as he can. You may know him from all the rest of the world by his head going before his feet; by his pushing along as if going for a wager, and by his stoop and his round shoulders. An American gentleman observed, that, when he first came to London, all the people in the streets "seemed as if they were going on an *errand*, and had been charged to *make haste back*." Never was there a better description. If we see a man walking at a *leisurely* pace, in the country, we suspect him to be a thief, or, at least, a vagrant. Sunday seems to be the only day in the week when an Englishman does not enjoy himself. He lolls about, and looks out of spirits. The old saying, that "when the Devil finds any one with nothing to do, he is sure to set him to *work*," certainly had its origin in England. I wonder such a people should ever have had a Sunday or Churches. The Pope has left us some *Saint's Days*; but they have been disregarded by the nation at large; and, though retained for a long while in the public offices, they have all been abolished, at last, by Act of Parliament, the nation being *too busy* to indulge the whims of the Holy Father any longer. To have an idea of the everlasting industry of this nation, you have only to look at the garden of a labouring man. This is the scene of his *leisure* hours; that is to say, the *twilight* and the *Sunday*, when he will cultivate flowers or shrubs rather than submit to a minute's rest.

This propensity to incessant labour is common to all ranks of life. The lawyers, doctors, parsons, merchants; all are alike; and, as to the shopkeepers and tradesmen, they know not what leisure or pleasure means. The Gentlemen are as busy as the rest. They are half their lives on horseback. Hunting and shooting are their labour; and hard

labour too. Every man, also, aims at *perfection* in his way. He is not content unless he has *something* or *another*, in which he does, or thinks he does, surpass all other men. Hence our fine horses, dogs, sheep, cattle, the breeds of which are attended to with such inflexible perseverance. A score or two of gentlemen riding full speed down a hill nearly as steep as the roof of a house, where one false step must inevitably send horse and rider to certain death, is an object to be seen nowhere but in England. Nor are these sports, and that of boxing and other perilous exercises, to be left out in an enumeration of the causes of national power, though shallow philosophers affect to despise them. They tend to produce great energy in individuals, and it is of the union of individual energy that national power principally consists. To what does America owe the achievement and the preservation of her independence, but to the arms of a race of men, brave because they are hardy, and hardy because, from their infancy, they have been bred to labour and perilous pursuits?

In England every man tries to excel all others, not so much in rising above them in the scale of life, but in the particular line of life in which he is placed. He would rather not do any thing at all than not do it *well*. To this unconquerable spirit of perseverance it is that we owe that astonishing perfection to which we have arrived in most of mechanic arts, and in whatever appertains to agriculture, though, as to the last, we have, in many respects, to contend against nature itself. In every thing where *horses* are the chief instruments, (and horses are second only to men,) the English so far surpass all the rest of the world, that there is no room for comparison. The man who has a mind to *know* something of England in this respect, should walk from the Tower of London to Charing Cross a little after daylight in the morning, while the streets are clear of people. He would then see the teams of immense horses, drawing up from the bank of the Thames, coals, timber, stone, and other heavy materials. One morning last summer I counted, in various places, more than a hundred of these teams, worth *each of them*, harness, wagon, load and all, little less than a thousand pounds. The horses, upon an average, weigh more

than a ton. But, next after a *fox-hunt*, the finest sight in England is a stage-coach just ready to start. A great sheep or cattle fair is a beautiful sight; but, in the stagecoach you see more of what man is capable of performing. The vehicle itself, the harness, all so complete and so neatly arranged; so strong, and clean, and good. The beautiful horses impatient to be off. The inside full, and the outside covered, in every part, with men, women, children, boxes, bags, bundles. The coachman, taking his reins in one hand and his whip in the other, gives a signal with his foot, and away go, at the rate of seven miles an hour, the population and the property of a hamlet. One of these coaches coming in, after a long journey, is a sight not less interesting. The horses are now all sweat and foam, the reek from their bodies ascending like a cloud. The whole equipage is covered, perhaps, with dust or dirt. But still, on it comes as steady as the hand of the clock. As a proof of the perfection, to which this mode of travelling has been brought, there is one coach, which goes between Exeter and London, the proprietors of which agree to forfeit *eight-pence* for every minute that the coach is behind its time at any of its stages; and this coach, I believe, travels eight miles an hour, and that, too, upon a very hilly, and, at some seasons, very deep road.

There may be persons to say, "these descriptions may be very amusing to your readers in America, but what use can they be of to us in England." Why, it is for you that I principally intend them. I wish you to see, in these instances of your energy and your creative industry, specimens of the *real causes* of that national strength, which you foolishly attribute to the cleverness of a financier; to a sinking fund; or to any other of the numerous humbugs, with which you have been so long amused.

The *population* of a country is no standard of its strength, or, at least, the population alone is no such standard; if it were, it would be difficult to conceive how it has happened, that a handful of Englishmen have become the masters of India, and have been able to tax the people of that country as completely as we are taxed here, or very nearly so. *A man is a man*, to be sure; but, as Sterne said to the monk, "there is some differ-

ence in men, my friend." It is very clear, that, if there be one man who does, in the same line of business, as much as two other men, and if he travels twice as fast as either of them, he is better than both of them to his employer, because he eats no more than one of them, and requires no more clothes, lodging, &c., than one of them. It is just the same with a nation of such men. And, therefore, in estimating the strength of England, or any other country, we must look more at the character and performances of the people than at their numbers. In England every thing moves in a quick pace. The stirring disposition of the people shorten distances. More is done in the same space of time than in other countries. The tradesman in London almost holds a conversation with the tradesman at York or Exeter.

But the great thing of all is the *incessant labour*, which is continually creating things, which give strength to a country. I do not know, that we excel some other nations in ingenuity in the useful arts. Workmen are very adroit in America. They build as well, and more neatly, than we do. They work as nimbly. But they do not work *so much*. They take some leisure, which we never do. I must, however, always insist, that we derive infinite advantage from our sports. To these we owe, almost entirely, our second selves, our *horses*, of speed, and even these we should not have without our *dogs*. It is very well in the way of joke, to ridicule fox-hunting Squires and Parsons; but, if the matter be well considered, we shall find that these gentlemen are as usefully employed in this way as they would be in any other. By following this sport, they set an example of adventurous riding to those beneath them; and, if there had been no fox-hunting in England, I much question if we should have seen five thousand yeomanry cavalry instead of the *hundred thousand*, who, at one time, were actually mounted on their own horses and in their own uniforms. No matter for the *cause* in which they came forth. The cause might have been different. A regiment of soldiers all of whom can *ride*, and *box*, and *shoot*, must be much more formidable than a regiment of men who only know how to dance, and sing, and act plays. It must be the same with a nation. The "walking mania,"

as it has been called, is, in my opinion, a thing highly to be prized; and especially that wonderful exploit of Capt. BARCLAY, which, however, has now been surpassed by the man, who has walked *eleven hundred miles in eleven hundred hours*, and whose name I am sorry I have forgotten. What is this but a great instance of the bodily powers of man? What man will now not be ashamed to say, that he wants a horse or a coach to carry him twenty or thirty miles in a day? The standard of the capacity of man has been raised by these performances; and there can be no question that the nation has really been made stronger by them.

The philosophers of the "humanity" school condemn all these things as vulgar, brutal, and barbarous. They look upon them as the contrary of *refinement*. They represent it to be an act of cruelty, for a crowd of horsemen to hollow after a pack of dogs in pursuit of a poor animal, who, they say, has done them no harm, and in whose torments they feel delight. I notice this more particularly, as I perceive the sickly sentimental taste to have made great way in America. But, what is there more cruel in a fox-chase than in those sports with the gun, in which the Americans are so famous, and to their early pursuit of which they, probably, owe their liberties?

I have thus, though in a desultory way, described what appears to me to be the real foundation of the *strength of England*; and, it is of great importance that we, and that you, should form a correct judgment on the subject. It is always the object of the government to make us believe, that whatever we have *we owe to it*. It was, during the Duke of York's famous affair, asserted by Mr. Charles Yorke, that it was His Royal Highness *who had made the English Army what it was*; and if any man happens to know of any assertion more impudent, ever uttered from a pair of lips, I shall be obliged to him to point it out to me. While Pitt was in high reputation, his parasites ascribed the prosperity of the nation to him. It was *his financial system* that had made England what it was; and his successors, though they acknowledged him as their founder, have, until now, continued to take to themselves the merit of having *done a great deal for us*. Now they lay the *miseries* of the country upon *chance*, upon

a combination of *unfavourable causes*. The truth is, that the real, the solid means of the country, they have not been able to take away; but by Pitt and by them such a system of management has been adopted and pursued, that, the whole of the affairs of the country have been thrown into confusion; a convulsion in matters of property has taken place; the hand of industry has been arrested; confidence between man and man (which is our *real birthright*) threatens to be destroyed, or, at least, suspended; and, as a necessary consequence, comparative feebleness must ensue. This is the way, in which their fine plans and projects have made the country *prosperous*.

Give me leave here, before I proceed further, to caution *you* against a very dangerous error. I see, much oftener than I could wish, very exaggerated praises bestowed on the memory of GENERAL WASHINGTON. Doubtless you owe him great gratitude. His skill, fortitude, and valour contributed largely towards your success. But, to call him the *Father of your country*; the *Father of your Independence*; is a little too much in our courtly style, and has a very dangerous tendency. *Names* are always mischievous, especially in Republics. One *Name* is, at last, put in opposition to another *Name*, and then the public soon drop out of sight. Amongst all our innumerable follies, we have had the sense to get rid of *Names*; and, it would be provoking indeed to see you persevere in this greatest of all follies after we have cast it off.

Another notable trick that has been played off upon us, and with astonishing success, is the attributing of our prosperity and strength to the increase of our *external commerce*, which, for what reason official impudence itself has never ventured to explain, is ascribed *wholly to the ministers*. Just as if they gave us the wool, and cotton, and iron, and also the sugar, and coffee, and wine, and gave us the ships and sailors, and found us the customers! Besides, there is a gross and monstrous folly running through the whole thing. It is a mass of notions as false as ridiculous, and as despicable as are any of the legends of Popery. A thing called an "account of Imports and Exports" is *faced up* for us every year; and there are nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand persons, who really believe, that

the amount is so much money *gained*, and gained, too, by some *contrivance of the ministers*, with which the people of this country have nothing at all to do; and, when the augmentation of the taxes used to be talked of, in Pitt's time; "ay," said that impudent fellow, "but look at the augmentation that *I have made in the commerce of the country.*" Just as if it had not been the industry and enterprise of the people, which had created all this additional commerce; and just as if, after all, the internal resources, arising from this industry, were not the only means of rendering this external commerce of any use in point of revenue. Ships, and Docks, and Ware houses, and Custom houses, make a great *show* and a great noise. The imports from the East and West-Indies. Our numerous colonies. All these make a monstrous figure in newspapers and in talk. But, when we come to see, that the duties of Customs all put together, that all the taxes raised upon ships and upon foreign goods, *do not amount to nearly so much as the taxes yielded by that part of our own barley which is made into drink*; when we come to see this, the illusion vanishes in a twinkling.

They tell us of the advantage of the East Indies, and how much the article of Tea alone *yields us* in taxes. Just as if we did not *pay these taxes ourselves*! Just as if the East-India Company *gave us* the amount of these taxes! Just as if the means of paying them did not arise out of the fruits of our own internal industry, that great and only source of national wealth and strength. This is a favourable time to endeavour to impress these truths upon the minds of the nation. For, we now see and feel, that, when our *internal affairs* are disturbed; when the hand of industry is arrested *at home*; when confidence is once shaken between man and man *here*; when this takes place, we see, that all is distress and misery; we see, that the grand display of Exports and Imports and Tonnage is all empty noise.

The present ruin has been brought upon the country by the mismanagement of its affairs, and those only are responsible, who have been guilty of this mismanagement. They have done what they pleased with the resources of the country. They have employed them in wars, in

subsidies, in conquests, in contracts, and salaries. To facilitate the execution of their schemes, they have created a fictitious currency, liable to fluctuations in value. A revolution in the state of this currency has, at last, all of a sudden, produced a transfer of real property and of goods from the owners to the owners of money. It has rendered the former insolvent, and that, too, almost without benefit to the latter, while the labouring class, who depended solely upon agriculture and trade, have been hurled down into the state of paupers. Since my return home, I find, that it is now become a common practice to *discharge* almost the whole of the labourers, send them for relief to the *parish*, and then to *hire them of the parish* at sixpence a day; thus reducing them to the lowest possible scale of bodily sustenance, and degrading them to nearly the level of beasts. Yet, what are the farmers to do? They have not the means of paying any thing worthy to be called *wages*. They have put a total stop to all *improvements*; to all the means of enriching land; there will be hardly any fallowing; the riches that are in the land will be drawn out of it; springs will be suffered to overflow; fences will fall out of repair; and, in two years, if things continue thus, the improvements, the sources of wealth and strength, acquired by the industry and enterprise of twenty years, will have been lost.

And is there to be no *responsibility* for all this terrible mischief? Are we to regard it as a visitation of Providence for our sins? Are we to sit down and cry, and to blame nobody upon earth for it? A poor attempt has been made to make the nation believe, that all this misery has arisen from mere ordinary causes; that such scenes are the natural consequence of a sudden transition from war to peace; and, some have been impudent enough to assert, that similar distresses occurred at the close of the *American War*. What a barefaced falsehood! No: there was then no fictitious currency; there was then no revolution in property; there was then no such distress. Our miseries are the consequence of the mismanagement of our affairs.

It is impossible for things to go on in this course. There must be some *great change by law*. If it were *just*, that the present owners of land and stock in

trade should yield their property to the owners of money, and to persons in the pay of the government, the thing CAN-NOT BE. To effect the transfer is physically impossible. Before it were half carried through, the highways would be strewn with starved and putrid carcasses. If, in some parts, whole parishes have already been deserted by the farmers, leaving the Parson and the Poor to eat the dirt and the hedges, what is the thing to come to in the end? What have we to look for before two more years are over our heads? But, men *will not* be ruined and starved in such numbers. It is impossible to make *millions* of men submit to ruin and starvation. After having witnessed such measures as the Brown-Bread law; the Corn Bill; the Soup-shop project; the Potato project; and some others, it would be presumption even to *guess* at what may be resorted to. Nor, indeed, need we much *care* what is *now* to be done; for, certain it is, that, in spite of the brilliant prospects opened to us by the marriage and marriage settlement of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, *something of great importance must be done.*

But, shall we endure all this misery without *calling to account* those who have had the management of our affairs? Shall the men, who have actually brought into misery, into a state of bodily suffering, more than one half of a whole nation, escape unpunished? If they do, what becomes of the talk about *ministerial responsibility*? Why, it will be, what it long has been, a most barefaced cheat, practised upon a silly people. There have been, since my return to England, embezzlement, speculation, fraud, bribery, corruption, perjury, oppression, and all of the most flagrant kind, *proved* upon different ministers. But, no minister has ever been *punished*; and, in numerous instances, in order to secure them for the time to come, acts of *indemnity* have been passed in their favour. Let us hope, however, that, as the day of reckoning is come for the people, a day of reckoning will come for their rulers; for those who have deluded them, who have told them falsehoods, who have misapplied the resources of the country; and who have carried on, for so many years, a systematic attack on its freedom.

The waste of the public money is now exciting the attention of the people. The

enormous amount of the *Prince Regent's* expenses is now much dwelt on, and the language of the House of Commons relative to him is become uncommonly bold, though, certainly, he is a petty cormorant, compared with the Boroughmongers themselves. An attempt has been made to silence this formidable battery; but, without success. The affair is very curious, and, when freely explained, without any reserve, as I am about to explain it here, will afford you a great deal of useful information.

Mr. BROUGHAM, a few nights ago, (I quote *his accusers*,) said of the Prince Regent, "that the conduct of the STUARTS, "which lost them the Crown of these "Realms, was *comparatively harmless and* "innocent; that the Sovereign entertains "no scruples of religion, and experiences "no tenderness of conscience; that he "proceeds from one wasteful expenditure "to another, in utter disregard of the "feelings of an oppressed and insulted "nation; that he associates with the most "profligate of human beings; that he "cannot suspend his thoughtless amusements to end the sad suspense between "life and death; and that he trusts to "mercenaries, not daring to trust to the "attachment of the nation, for his security."

Most outrageous abuse has been lavished on Mr. Brougham for this passage of his speech, which has been called an attack on the "*illustrious* House of Brunswick." But, the outcry has failed. The people, whom misery has brought, partly, at any rate, to their senses, are not now to be amused with any cries against "*disloyalty*." They feel the want of money to pay the taxes; they see, that the payments, demanded of them by the government, absorb all that they have to discharge their private debts. When they meet each other upon the subject of their mutual demands, they join in execrating the hand that perseveres in robbing them both. In such a temper of mind they are very little disposed to take part in a cry in behalf of the Royal Family, whom they now perceive to be fed in luxury upon the very life-blood of the people. It is now by no means rare to hear tradesmen and farmers say, that the paupers have been created by the extravagance of the government! and, which has given me singular pleasure, at two county

meetings, those of Wiltshire and Berkshire, has been brought forward amidst great applause, the *example of America* with her President and his 6,000 pounds a year.

The people, therefore; do not join in the cry against Mr. Brougham; but, they inquire, very calmly, whether what he has asserted, relative to the Prince, be true; and, assuredly, this question must be answered in the affirmative. "*That the Prince has no scruples of religion, and experiences no tenderness of conscience,*" does not admit of any other proof than that afforded by his acts. Amongst those acts are notorious drunkenness; the driving of his wife from his bed; living in the most open manner with other women; giving encouragement to those who preferred false accusations against his wife; persevering in his persecution of her after her innocence, or, at least, the falsehoods and malice of her accusers had been completely established; and, if these acts do not discover a want of religion and of tenderness of conscience, I should be glad to know what proof would be sufficient to make good such a charge. "*That the Prince Regent proceeds from one wasteful expenditure to another, in utter disregard of the feelings of an oppressed and insulted nation;*" who can doubt, when it is notorious, that, after having squandered, on his own pleasures, more than 5,000,000 of pounds, previously to his being Regent, he has, during the 4 years of his Regency, expended on himself, his pleasures, and his minions, more than 2,000,000 of pounds? When it is known, that he has frequently fitted up apartments, one month, at the expense of many thousands, and turned out the furniture the next month to make way for another suit; who can doubt of the justice of the charge, when the facts are notorious? He has now in his pavilion some Chinese Wax-work figures, which cost 50,000*l.* And a man is kept to stand behind a curtain to keep their heads in motion, when company enters the room where they are. There, surely, wants nothing more to justify this charge of extravagance, which extravagance is, besides, practised at a time when hundreds of thousands of the people are plunged into the most shocking distress by the weight of the taxes. "*That the Prince associates with the MOST*

profligate of human beings" may not be strictly true; for it is possible that there may be men as profligate as the employer of Captain Henry and the murderer of Marshal Ney; it is possible that there may be men as profligate as Bloomfield and M'Mahon; it is even possible that Lords Yarmouth and Melbourne may have their match; but, as to the ladies of His Royal Highness's acquaintance, they are certainly unequalled in the annals of infamy, knowing, as they must, the characters of Bloomfield, M'Mahon, and others, with whom they assist in administering to the amusements of this frivolous man. "*That he cannot suspend his thoughtless amusements to end the sad suspense between life and death.*" That he does not do this is notorious; for, it has been proved in parliament that there are 58 persons, some of whom have been condemned to death ever since December, and who, owing to the report of their cases not having been received by him, are, to this moment uncertain, whether they be to live or die. "*That he trusts to MERCENARIES, not daring to trust to the attachment of the nation, for security.*" That his pavilion at Brighton, that his place in town, that his carriage, that his person, wherever he goes, is surrounded by mercenary troops is a fact so notorious that no one will attempt to contradict it. It is also notorious, that he has had, upon every trifling alarm, cannon planted in his palace yard and in his garden. It is notorious that he dare not stir abroad for fear of the hisses and hootings of the people. It is notorious, that when he attempted to appear in the streets, under cover of the Emperor Alexander and Old Blucher, he retreated from a volley of hisses and execrations, fearing that it would be succeeded by a volley of stones torn up from the pavement. It is notorious that he dared not even go down to Portsmouth by daylight; that, while there, (when the Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia were there,) he never once showed himself in public; that the Dutchess of Oldenburg, whose carriage was, at its first approach, on Portsdown-hill, taken for that of the Prince, was frightened half to death by the hisses that saluted her ears, 'til she leaned forward and convinced the Prince's "*loving,*" but unmannerly, subjects of their mistake. All these facts are notorious, and, being notorious, what im-

pudence must the hirelings of the press have to affect, that *the people* will hear Mr. Brougham's language with *indignation*! So far from this being true, that the fact is, that the *praises* of this attack of Mr. Brougham are in every one's mouth. People stop one another with "have you seen how Mr. Brougham has *laid it on* the Prince?"

What, then, can be the object of those, who are pretending that the country has *condemned* this attack of Mr. BROUGHAM? The Courier, perceiving that this gentleman had missed to *speak* during a subsequent debate, inserts the following commentary on the circumstance: "Now upon so strange an event, conjecture will of course be at work. Has he yielded to any remonstrance from his Party in consequence of his attack upon the Sovereign on Wednesday night? or does he wish, by not speaking, to withdraw the public attention and indignation in consequence of that attack? But this, as far as we have any means of preventing it, shall not be. And here we beg to ask, whether, if such an attack had been made by any man out of Parliament, by the Editor of a Paper, for instance, he might not and would not have been prosecuted for an offence very nearly approaching to a high misdemeanour? Would it not be considered as calculated to bring the Sovereign's person and government into contempt, to charge him with having no religious scruples, no tenderness of conscience, a total disregard of the feelings of an oppressed nation; with associating with the most profligate of human beings; with not daring to trust to the attachment of the nation for security, and with owing his security only to mercenaries?—But Mr. Brougham must not be made to stand alone. His Party affect, out of doors, to blame him, and to exonerate themselves from all participation in his sentiments. They find that his speech *has excited one feeling of disgust and indignation* throughout the country, and hence *they are eager to disavow it.*" This is impudently false; but the American reader will ask, *what purpose* the falsehood can answer, seeing that the whole nation must know it to be false? Why, in the first place, it may sooth the poor *log* himself; and which is of more importance, it may cause foreign nations and foreigners in England

(not much acquainted with the real facts) to believe, that Mr. Brougham has really offended the people by his attack, which observe, having been read in the *Debates*, will be read nowhere else, seeing that no man dares publish any such sentiments in any other shape, and seeing that no one dares *contradict* these assertions of the COURIER, lest, for so doing, he should be punished as a *libeller*, upon the ground, that "to *deny* that praises of the Prince are *just*, is to insinuate that he is the *contrary* of what those praises describe him to be." It is very probable, that the proprietor of the Courier has received 50*l.* for the article, from which the above extract is made. His name is DANIEL STUART; he is a Scotchman; he was a *journeyman Taylor* about 25 years ago; and he now rides in a very fine coach, with coachman and footmen in fine liveries! His income cannot, I think, be so little as *six thousand pounds a year*. His brother, who was also a newspaper proprietor, but who had less talent of this sort, is *English Consul* at Havre-de-Grace, a post given him on account of Daniel Stuart's merits. This is the way that John Bull's press is managed.

It may be asked, and not without reason, why a man, situated as the Prince is, should wish *to live* at all, and especially why he should *care* about the opinions of the nation? Very true, it is a life of disgrace, and would be insupportable to a man of spirit; but, then, a man of spirit never could have been brought into such a state. His enjoyments are merely of an animal kind. Voluptuousness has made him effeminate and timid. It is *life* that he loves, and not fame. His amusements are those of a great over-grown baby, his conversation such as is not to be repeated *anywhere*. He is said now to be *getting better* in point of health; but, from the following account of his "*riding out*," the reader will easily guess how emaciated he must be. "His Royal Highness's convalescence appears to be too slow to afford any certain prospect of his quitting Brighton for some time to come. It is true that the PRINCE has *been on horseback*, and has rode for some time about the Pavilion lawn. An inclined plane was constructed, rising to about the height of two feet and a half, at the upper end of which was a platform. His Royal Highness was placed in a chair upon rollers, and so moved up the as-

“cent and placed upon the platform,
 “which was then *raised by screws*, high
 “enough to pass the horse under; and,
 “finally, his Royal Highness was *let*
 “*gently down into the saddle*. By these
 “means the REGENT was undoubtedly
 “enabled to enjoy, in some degree, the
 “benefit of air and exercise; but the ex-
 “ercise implied little of spontaneous
 “muscular power, and cannot certainly
 “be considered as a criterion of reno-
 “vated health.”

This account has been published in all the newspapers, and a pretty picture of “*the Sovereign*” it is! This is the state of the son, while the Royal Sire is, as all the world knows, actually insane, and he is, too, treated like other violent madmen, the *beating* part not excepted. Those, who are fond of *Monarchy*, like the aristocrats of New-England, in some of whose writings this government was distinctly and expressly preferred to that of Mr. MADISON and the Congress; such persons should now look at this government a little. If, however, they should still prefer it; if they should like a Sovereign placed upon his horse by the means of an “*inclined plane* and screws”—I do not know but we might be prevailed upon to spare them the illustrious Regent for a few years at least; for, base and foolish as we have been in *Old England*, and as many of us yet are, I really think, that, in baseness and folly, some persons in New-England have far surpassed the very worst of us, who have always had the *cause of our country* as an excuse at any rate, while their baseness and folly was directed against their country, and in favour of an enemy, who was actually ravaging the coasts of their sister states.

In some of the New-England newspapers (in the Boston Centinel, I think) I sometimes see the words, “*His Majesty*,” made use of without farther particulars, just as they would be made use of at Halifax or in Jamaica. Some have degradation forced upon them; some are partly beaten and partly cajoled into degradation; some submit to degradation for the sake of gain, others for the sake of quietness, others because they would not be singular, others because they do not know what degradation is. But, that a man, without compulsion, without deception, without temptation of gain, and without the pretext of ignorance, should, like this

Boston Editor, openly, and in his very phraseology, proclaim himself voluntarily degraded, is, to me, something wholly inexplicable. However, such is this gentleman’s taste; and, I can assure him, that as far as any knowledge of the fact extends in England, his unaccountable complaisance yields him a most bountiful return of contempt. It is a pity that “*His Majesty*” is not in a situation to feel and express gratitude towards this his “*loving subject*” of Boston. Nevertheless, as it might be gratifying to the author of the *Centinel* to be able personally to tender his homage to “*The Sovereign*,” if he will take the pains to come to England, I will undertake to procure him an introduction into the palace, but would advise him to prepare his head for a salutation with a *poker*, in the use of which “*His Majesty*” is said to be uncommonly adroit, to that degree, indeed, that the people of Windsor, when they see any one with his head tied up, call him a *knight of the Poker*.

I am well aware of the vigilance as well as of the power of *cant*. *Cant* is the great talent of the age. I am aware of the efforts which *cant* may make to torture this into unfeeling levity upon a subject so afflicting to humanity. But, with all due deference to *cant*, the levity is not applied to the poor old man’s affliction, but to that ridiculous baseness, that contemptible self-degradation, that servile abandonment of a man’s own natural importance, which induces him, with such a striking proof of the contrary before his eyes, to affect to look upon kings as *formed* to rule mankind, and to consider as *usurpers* all those individuals who are chosen by a people to supplant them.

I can assure these loyal American writers, that they would be surprised, if they were to come to England, to find that these notions about kings and loyalty are quite obsolete. They judge from what they see swimming upon the surface. They read our newspapers, debates, addresses, Magazines, Reviews, and books. It is an enslaved and corrupted press that they judge from. They do not hear the people *talk*. The present scene is, therefore, very interesting. The people are now *talking loud*. The Meetings, held in the several counties and towns; these are the occasions where men dare speak, and where they do speak. In the

county of Middlesex the people have declared, in their petition, that they behold with indignation the tyranny exercised by the Bourbons under the protection of an English army; at Nottingham they have expressed their shame and sorrow at seeing the "legal murders committed in France under the sanction, if not the instigation, of the English government."

The voice of the whole nation is fast rising up against the atrocities of the government, which has found, after all, that its most formidable foe is the *right of petition*, that mere solitary right, which is the only one that the people have left, and which has been, however, narrowed as much as possible. What a eulogium is this fact on popular rights and popular government! This corrupt government, having, at last, cast off all hypocrisy; grown insolent by success; just at the moment when it thought it might do any thing that it chose, finds itself suddenly stopped, and is compelled to listen while it is told of all its evil deeds. To be in England just at this time must be unpleasant to such men as the loyal Editor at Boston, whom I have noticed above. I really should like to see the delegates of the Hartford Convention here for the remainder of this session of Parliament. How disappointed they would be to find that there is not now, in *Old England*, any man impudent enough to attempt, in public, to justify the deeds of this government, which deeds were justified in *New-England*! If I could have seen the whole of the Convention at the County Meeting of Wiltshire, on Thursday last, I would not have grudged paying the expenses of their passage to England and back again. At this Meeting, held in virtue of a summons of the High Sheriff, and consisting of many thousands of persons of all ranks of life, the following Resolutions, after a long discussion, were passed without a single hand being held up against them.

"At a Meeting of the County of Wilts, held at the City of New Sarum, on

"Thursday, the 21st day of March, 1816, the High Sheriff in the chair, it was resolved,

"First,—That the distresses of Agriculture and Trade, which are notoriously prevalent throughout the whole country, have arisen from the great load of taxes, which have been employed principally in the cause of despotism and persecution, and from the operation of a paper currency, through the means of which the Ministry, in conjunction with the Bank of England, have now doubled, in fact, the burthens of all those who do not derive their means of living out of the public revenue.

"Second,—That it is in vain to look for a remedy in any thing but a diminution of taxation, and in a strict inquiry into the means by which the treasures of the nation have been squandered, a rigid search for the present place of deposit of those treasures, and just and legal measures to recover, for the use of the nation, whatsoever part of them may have been fraudulently or iniquitously alienated from it.

"Third,—That it is degrading to the nation to be compelled to maintain a regular military force in time of peace, to any extent whatever, and it must fill every man with indignation to be told, that a considerable part of an immense standing army is necessary to preserve peace in England, and to keep the people of Ireland shut up in their houses from sunset to sunrise; that it is, however, notorious that an audacious and insolent Minister has dared openly to avow these purposes for keeping a large standing army embodied; and that it is his intention to rule us, if possible, by the point of the bayonet, we cannot entertain the smallest doubt; but, that we are quite certain that Englishmen, in whatever manner they may be Germanized in point of dress, (and, in part, commanded by foreigners in open violation of law,) will still be Englishmen in heart, and will never be found so

“ base, as to turn their arms against the
“ lives and liberties of their countrymen.

“ Fourth,—That it is manifestly un-
“ just, and discovers an unfeeling dispo-
“ sition in the government, not to have
“ reduced the salaries, the pensions, and
“ other allowances to persons paid out of
“ the public money, while it is notorious
“ that the price of all the necessaries of
“ life, and that the wages of labourers,
“ and that the profits of farmers and trades-
“ men, have been so materially reduced,
“ and that the same unfeeling disposition
“ has been, if possible, more signally dis-
“ covered in the grant of an enormous sum
“ of money out of the taxes to defray the
“ expenses of a new matrimonial connex-
“ ion, while it is well known that an im-
“ mense sum of money is deposited in the
“ funds, belonging to his Majesty, and
“ which money has been exempted from
“ the payment of the Property Tax, which
“ was so rigidly exacted from the whole
“ of his subjects, not excepting the wi-
“ dow and the orphan, who had their mite
“ in the same species of security.

“ Fifth,—That it is impossible to be-
“ lieve that this industrious, persevering,
“ and provident people, could ever have
“ been brought into the present ruined
“ state, if they had had the choosing of per-
“ sons to represent them, and to maintain
“ their rights; and that, therefore, as the
“ great cause of all the evils of the coun-
“ try, it is necessary that no time be lost
“ in doing away that system of bribery
“ and corruption which was so fully ex-
“ posed in the month of May, 1809, and
“ the existence of which was, by the
“ Members of the House of Commons
“ themselves, acknowledged to be as no-
“ torious as the sun at noonday.

“ Sixth,—That a Petition be present-
“ ed from this County to the House of
“ Commons, expressive of the above sen-
“ timents, and praying for that which
“ alone can afford the country a chance
“ of a restoration to prosperity, namely,
“ a Constitutional Reform in the House of
“ Commons of Parliament, so that, in re-

“ ality, and not in mockery, it may in fu-
“ ture be said that Englishmen are taxed
“ only by their own consent.

“ Resolved,—That the Petition now
“ read, be adopted by this Meeting.

“ Resolved,—That the High Sheriff be
“ requested to sign the same as the Peti-
“ tion of this Meeting.

“ Resolved,—That the same do lay one
“ week for signatures, at such place as
“ the High Sheriff may appoint.

“ Resolved,—That Sir Francis Burdett
“ be requested to present the Petition to
“ the House of Commons.

“ Resolved,—That the thanks of this
“ Meeting be given to the High Sheriff for
“ his readiness in calling this Meeting,
“ and for his impartial conduct in the
“ chair.

“ Resolved,—That the Sheriff be re-
“ quested to publish these Resolutions in
“ the County Papers, and in two London
“ Evening and two Morning Papers.”

A petition, in the words of these reso-
lutions, was agreed to; but, it was the
speeches, upon this occasion, that I should
have liked the Delegates of the Hartford
Convention to hear. The gentleman who
moved the resolutions, said, in one part of
his speech, “ that he could hardly keep
“ his temper when he observed, that the
“ Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, for merely mar-
“ rying the Princess Charlotte, was, in
“ case of her death, to receive 50,000*l.* a
“ year for life, a sum eight times as large
“ as that which was allotted to the Pre-
“ sident of the United States, the Chief
“ Magistrate of *the only free country in*
“ *the world*, a country nearly equal to
“ England in point of population, and go-
“ verned with wisdom and mildness with-
“ out a parallel.”

I, who was present at this Meeting,
having a freehold in Wiltshire, could not,
while I was listening to this speech, help
wishing that the Hartford Delegates, and
Governor Strong, and the Cossack Priests,
and wise Mr. John Randolph, had been in
the crowd along with us. How they would
have stared with surprise to see a *whole*

County of "Jacobins" in England, with the High Sheriff (appointed by the king) at their head! There was a gentleman, at the Berkshire County Meeting, who explained to the people the nature of the American government, told them how *cheap* it was, and then told them that a part of our Debt arose from an attempt on the part of our government to *destroy* the government of America.

I have observed before, but I cannot help observing again, how important, how valuable to the whole world, how valuable to England in particular, is the existence of your government, especially now that it has stood through the storms of war, invasion, menaced bankruptcy, and bitter faction. You see, that it is an example for the friends of economy, justice, and freedom to hold up to their opponents here. You see what powerful arguments it puts in our hands; arguments of experience, which are much more convincing than any other to the mass of the people in every country. Sacred, really sacred, therefore, is the government committed to your safe-keeping; and detested ought to be those who would undermine it, or in any way endeavour to subvert it. If the government of the United States had been overthrown; if, only for a time, it had been dissolved by the late war; if any division of the union had taken place, though only for a year, the triumph of despotism would have been complete. Your success in arms, though very brilliant, was nothing when compared with your political success. Despotisms send forth very gallant armies and fleets; they gain victories and make conquests; but, it was reserved for *you* to prove to the world, that the government of a really free people can safely exist amidst the most tremendous of wars. The whole of your course, as to the late war; the long forbearance of your government; the manifest reluctance with which it entered on the war; the readiness and anxiety which it discovered to put an end to it; its inflexible adherence to its principles of humanity and moderation, in

spite of insults, and all sorts of provocations; its firmness, in an hour of great peril, not to yield a single point of honour; its calmness in the midst of dangers, and its unlimited confidence in the good sense and public spirit of the people; and the matchless generosity shown by the whole of you towards those enemies who fell into your power: all these things have produced a great impression upon the minds of men in England, and, doubtless, in other countries. But, it is *here* where it is desirable to produce the effect; *here*, where such a mass of means are concentrated in so small a space, and are so quickly and so easily drawn forth for good or for evil purposes; *here*, where a misdirection of the public mind is, as experience has proved, capable of plunging half the world into misery.

To be sure, this nation has, for many years, been acting a most wicked and base part; it has, and very *cordially* too, been supporting the government in every species of injustice and cruelty towards foreign nations; and we are, unquestionably, a proud and insolent people as far as regards other nations. But, still, the late abominable wars never could have been carried on without the aid of *popular delusion*; or, at least, they could not have been carried on for the real purposes which the government had in view. If the *press had been free*, or, if there had been *no press at all*, in England, most assuredly the Bourbons would never have been restored. It was a deluding press, read everywhere, and a free press, read nowhere: it was eloquent falsehood and dumb truth that restored tyranny in France. At a County Meeting in Somersetshire, in the year 1812, a motion was made relative to the waste of the public money, which was out-voted by *a thousand to one*. The gentleman who made the motion told the Meeting, at the time, that, though they could out-vote him, *they could not out-vote events*. At a Meeting, in the same County, about three weeks ago, he brought forward, amongst

others, the same identical motion, which was passed unanimously. This fact alone is sufficient to show how the minds of the people have been enlightened, at last, by *events*; for, as to the press, it has improved but very little. Suffering has emboldened some men to speak out, and has induced all men to listen; and I really begin to conceive hopes, that it would not now be an easy matter to obtain the approbation of the country to a war against any nation, who did not first attack, or most grossly insult us.

In the mean while, it is quite certain, that we are deriving incalculable benefit from *your example*, which is a standing and unanswerable argument against the necessity of expensive government; against rotten Boroughs; against standing armies in time of peace; and, in short, against all sorts of oppressions and corruptions. As to any material change in our government; I mean in its *form*, I do not think that there are many people who care about it. It is the opinion of the most distinguished reformer in England, that it is the part of wisdom to take established forms as they are; to attempt an abolition of neither the kingly nor aristocratical branches, but to obtain for the people

their undoubted right of being fairly represented in their own house of parliament. There is a great deal in the habits of ages. Every institution that we see about us has on it the stamp of approbation of our forefathers. We all know, that England has been a very happy and free country; or, at least, we say so, and think so; and, it is notorious that she has always had kings, lords, and bishops. You, in America, can have no idea of the power of traditionary sentiments. I am persuaded that there is hardly a man in England, who would *even wish* to see the form of the government changed; but, there certainly is a very general and anxious desire to see such a reform as would give to every man, who pays a tax, the right of voting for Members of Parliament; and, one of the great arguments in favour of such a reform, is, that you, with such perfect freedom as to choosing your representatives, and with a representative government from top to bottom, require no soldiers to assist in preserving the peace amongst you, are able to defend yourselves in war, and are a prosperous and happy nation.

WM. COBBETT.

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